

REMARKS

In the outstanding Final Office Action ("Office Action"), claims 1-6, 10-12, and 17-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Niitsuma et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0050782 A1, "Niitsuma") in view of Maeda et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,791,703 B1, "Maeda") and Saito (U.S. Patent No. 6,128,101, "Saito"); claims 7, 8, 13, and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Niitsuma in view of Maeda and Saito, and further in view of Sesek (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0171864 A1, "Sesek"); and claims 9, 15, and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Niitsuma in view of Maeda, Saito, and Sesek, and further in view of Kuroda (U.S. Patent No. 6,804,020 B1, "Kuroda").

Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1-6, 10-12, and 17-20 as being unpatentable over Niitsuma in view of Maeda and Saito for the reasons set forth next.

Independent claim 1 recites, *inter alia*,

"control means for determining whether or not the transfer source of said image data is the self image printing apparatus by confirming whether or not the apparatus ID received by said second image data reception means coincides with an apparatus ID which specifies the self image printing apparatus stored in said apparatus ID storage means, and when said transfer source of said image data is not the self image printing apparatus, causing said image printing means to print an image based on the image data received by said second image data reception means on the basis of a limitation set by said external data output limitation setting means."

The Office Action concedes at page 10 that Niitsuma fails to teach such a control means but asserts that "this is well known in the art as evidenced by Maeda." Applicant respectfully disagrees. Although the Office Action asserts at pages 10-11 that in Maeda

“when a user enters in ID information in order to use the apparatus, the image forming apparatus compares this ID information to the ID information stored in the printing device” and that “[i]f the ID information entered does not match the ID information stored, the system will perform the limitation on the user by not letting them perform the printing feature until the correct ID information is recognized by the printing device,” the type of “matching” mentioned in the Office Action (i.e., matching against a *user* ID such as that user’s password) does not correspond to the type of “matching” arising in claim 1, which recites “control means for determining whether or not the transfer source of said image data is the self image printing apparatus by confirming whether or not the *apparatus ID* received . . . coincides with an *apparatus ID* which specifies the self image printing apparatus stored in said apparatus ID storage means.” Therefore, because Maeda’s user ID information pertains to a user, not to an apparatus, Maeda does not teach or suggest a control means for determining anything by confirming whether *apparatus ID*’s coincide, and thus also does not teach or suggest such a control means for determining “and . . . causing said image printing means to print an image . . . on the basis of a limitation set by said external data output limitation setting means” (i.e., even if Maeda were to teach a user-based limitation, that limitation is not caused by a control means causing it based on a determination that is based on an apparatus ID).

Consistent with Applicant’s arguments, the Office Action concedes at page 11 that “the combination of Niitsuma ‘782 and Maeda ‘703 fails to specifically teach a control means for determining whether or not the transfer source of said image data is the self image printing by confirming whether or not the apparatus ID received by said second image data reception means coincides with an apparatus ID” but asserts at

page 12 that “this is well known in the art as evidenced by Saito because Saito discloses a “facsimile device . . . that is able to store message ID information . . . contain[ing] the sender address, which can be the actual facsimile device” and that “[b]y comparing the header of the mail on the server with the header of the mail on the facsimile device, the system determines, or confirms, that the transfer of mail is from the same source.” Applicant respectfully disagrees. Saito discloses a procedure for deciding “whether mail is acceptable from mail server 3 or not and whether it is necessary to delete mail from mail server 3 or not” (c. 3, ll. 23-25) based on an analysis of “a message ID [that] is the identification data of mail and is generally a unique character string added to the header of a mail message” (c. 3, ll. 33-35). Because “different pieces of mail never have the same message ID” (c. 3, ll. 35-36), Saito determines whether a message must be kept or deleted by determining whether any other message in the server has the same message ID (see c. 3, l. 38, to c. 4, l. 67). However, Saito’s procedure does not involve any “apparatus ID” because its “unique character string added to the header of a mail message” is information pertaining to a message, not an apparatus, and to the extent that Saito’s e-mail may contain the sender’s address, that address is not used in Saito’s determinations. Moreover, contrary to Saito’s definition of a “message ID,” an “apparatus ID” is not necessarily unique to any message from an apparatus (e.g., although each one of many different messages coming from the same apparatus would have its own “message ID,” such messages would have the same “apparatus ID” if they included that information).

In addition, although the Office Action proposes at page 13 that one would be motivated to modify Niitsuma and Maeda by Saito “in order to distinguish e-mail

information that has been left by the facsimile apparatus (as stated in Saito '101 col. 1, ln 44-48)," Applicant respectfully submits that Saito does not relate to "distinguish[ing] e-mail information" in the sense of identifying an e-mail coming from one apparatus rather than from another apparatus but instead relates to distinguishing e-mails in the sense of comparing the message ID's of e-mails (e.g., to determine whether an e-mail is a newly-received e-mail or an e-mail that was previously received but was left on the server (see, c. 1, l. 47; c. 6, l. 30, to c. 7, l. 15)), and in any event that distinguishing between e-mail "message ID's" has no relevance to determining whether or not image data pertains to a particular apparatus ID.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that Niitsuma, Maeda, and Saito, whether taken alone or in any combination, fail to teach or suggest at least a "control means for determining whether or not the transfer source of said image data is the self image printing apparatus by confirming whether or not the apparatus ID received by said second image data reception means coincides with an apparatus ID which specifies the self image printing apparatus stored in said apparatus ID storage means, and when said transfer source of said image data is not the self image printing apparatus, causing said image printing means to print an image based on the image data received by said second image data reception means on the basis of a limitation set by said external data output limitation setting means," as recited in independent claim 1.

Independent claim 17 recites, *inter alia*,

"a control section for determining whether or not the transfer source of said image data is the image printing apparatus itself by confirming whether or not the apparatus ID received by said data reception section

coincides with an apparatus ID which specifies the image printing apparatus itself stored in said storage section, and when said transfer source of said image data is not the image printing apparatus itself, causing said image printing section to print an image based on the image data received by said data reception section on the basis of a limitation set by said setting section.”

The Office Action concedes and asserts at pages 38-41 essentially the same points regarding this feature of independent claim 17 as the points mentioned above regarding independent claim 1. In response, Applicant respectfully submits, for the same reasons set forth above regarding independent claim 1, that Niitsuma, Maeda, and Saito, whether taken alone or in any combination, fail to teach or suggest at least “a control section for determining whether or not the transfer source of said image data is the image printing apparatus itself by confirming whether or not the apparatus ID received by said data reception section coincides with an apparatus ID which specifies the image printing apparatus itself stored in said storage section, and when said transfer source of said image data is not the image printing apparatus itself, causing said image printing section to print an image based on the image data received by said data reception section on the basis of a limitation set by said setting section,” as recited in independent claim 17.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Niitsuma, Maeda, and Saito, whether taken alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest all the features of independent claims 1 and 17. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration of the rejection of independent claims 1 and 17 and their dependent claims 2-6, 10-12, and 18-20 as being unpatentable over Niitsuma in view of Maeda, and further in view of Saito.

Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration of the rejection of claims 7, 8, 13, and 14 as being unpatentable over Niitsuma in view of Maeda and Saito, and further in view of Seseek. In this regard, Applicant respectfully submits that Seseek fails to teach or suggest at least the aforementioned features of independent claim 1 not taught by Niitsuma, Maeda, and Saito. Therefore, Niitsuma, Maeda, Saito, and Seseek, whether taken alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest all the features of claims 7, 8, 13, and 14, which depend from independent claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration of the rejection of those claims as being unpatentable over Niitsuma in view of Maeda and Saito, and further in view of Seseek.

Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration of the rejection of claims 9, 15, and 16 as being unpatentable over Niitsuma in view of Maeda, Saito, and Seseek, and further in view of Kuroda. In this regard, Applicant respectfully submits that Kuroda fails to teach or suggest at least the aforementioned features of independent claim 1 not taught by Niitsuma, Maeda, Saito, and Seseek. Therefore, Niitsuma, Maeda, Saito, Seseek, and Kuroda, whether taken alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest all the features of claims 9, 15, and 16, which depend from independent claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration of the rejection of those claims as being unpatentable over Niitsuma in view of Maeda, Saito, and Seseek, and further in view of Kuroda.

Finally, Applicant noticed that the nonpatent literature document listed in the PTO/SB/08 form filed on May 16, 2007, does not appear to have been formally acknowledged as being considered by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicant

respectfully requests that the Examiner indicate on the PTO/SB/08 form with appropriate markings that this document has been considered by the Examiner.

The Final Office Action contains characterizations of the claims and the related art with which Applicant does not necessarily agree. Unless expressly noted otherwise, Applicant declines to subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Final Office Action.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our Deposit Account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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